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ABSTRACT

One direction in which English departments must turn in the search for effective methods of writing instruction is toward definition of responsibility for writing skills as an institution-wide concern. Any number of studies--a selection of which is included in an appended annotated bibliography--substantiate the premise that writing instruction must be carried beyond the limits of any one department if the student is to learn to write well in varied contexts. (Author/AA)

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Necessity, Invention, and Other Mothers--Going Interdepartmental

Minnesota Conference on Composition (June 21-24, 1977)
Panel: Interdepartmental Cooperation in Teaching Composition

C S 203 P65

Terence Collins
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Necessity, Invention, and Other Mothers--Going Interdepartmental

/NB: The heart of this paper is the selected annotated bibliography which lists and comments briefly on three dozen titles relevant to the question of interdepartmental responsibility for writing skills. Some titles on the list address the question directly; others are included because they touch on the subject while discussing other topics or because they raise issues central to the topic. As far as I know, the list is as complete as it can be in listing articles on the topic over the last decade through 1976 based on standard indexes and ERIC listings.

What comes between this note and the bibliography can be seen (indeed dismissed) as one man's adolescent attempt to destroy the education matrix which gave him professional birth. It can be seen this way, but I hope it won't be. Instead, I hope that it's seen for what it's intended to be: first, a rationale that presents some pedagogical reasons or perhaps only intuitions for "going interdepartmental" in our thinking about writing instruction; second, a partial discussion of some ways to accomplish this shift in perspective--both leading to the bibliography, through which you can get at the materials themselves and from which you can draw your own conclusions./

One healthy outgrowth of the current "writing crisis" in the colleges and universities is the recognition that responsibility for teaching writing skills and for establishing and maintaining standards for written work throughout the university is too big a burden for a twenty-week Freshman English course. While it would be financial suicide for English Departments to write a general disclaimer of responsibility for promoting good writing among the student population at large, it would be, at the same time, grandiose and pedagogically unsound to assume that English Departments on their own can hope to address the diverse writing needs of

the student body at large.

There are, of course, many options available to the English teacher who wants to define ways of shifting this responsibility for writing instruction at least in part to the non-English Department faculty or who wants to transcend familiar departmental compartments in improving the quality of writing among students from various disciplines. To argue in favor of any one model would be foolish, for what works for the occupation-oriented junior college student might not work for the upper-division professional student, and probably ought not, given the students' different goals. Therefore, what I'd like to do with the space I have is to briefly present a rationale for "going interdepartmental" and explore some of those courses and programs which have shown themselves to be workable in achieving this broader focus of writing instruction.

Rationale

A respondent to an informal survey of instructors in the University of Minnesota (Minneapolis) English Department's composition offerings in the school's Cross Disciplinary Studies Program overstated the case I want to make when he said, simply, "Straight comp is unteachable." For most of our students, I think, learning to write effectively in a standard Freshman English course is more than a little like learning to swim in the parlor--the student may learn the footwork and go through the basic strokes clearly enough, but you wouldn't want anyone to get too far from shore with that kind of training. As John Dixon says succinctly in Growth Through English (Oxford, 1969), "Language is learnt in operation, not by dummy runs" (13). Divorced from contexts which have academic or professional meaning, writing instruction serves no real defensible

purpose and produces at best only marginal long term results (see the "retrogression" phenomenon as discussed in Albert Kitzhaber, Themes, Theories, and Therapy /McGraw-Hill, 1963/). Moreover, the narrow "skills" emphasis which is emerging in reaction to the writing crisis in the schools unwittingly exacerbates the problem, for it substitutes means for ends: the intelligent representation of thoughts in contexts meaningful to both the student-writer and the teacher-audience is set aside in favor of dummy runs which aim--far too low--at mechanical competence in an intellectual vacuum.

The point is, very few of us write expository prose merely for the exercise, and those of us who might do so have no right or reason to project our hobbies onto students who pay us to teach them to write. When we write expository prose, we write to some purpose, we respond to some need we've created, perceived, or had imposed upon us (dissertations, conference papers, grant proposals, explanations for tax audits, committee reports and the like). Yet we persist in demanding that our students write for the exercise; we persist, probably because that's the way we were taught, in the vaguely defined belief that dummy runs will be generalized to "the real thing" when the student finds himself confronted with it. That seems to me to be foolish at best (If your experience and intuition don't confirm this, see the William Budd entry in the bibliography for statistical validation).

In a thorough and provocative discussion of this point, Richard Chmann, in English in America (Oxford, 1976, Chapter 6), defines the problem in terms of student "alienation" in the English 101 dummy run situation--alienation defined as "separation from one's work...powerlessness" (152). At the heart of the problem, Chmann says, is the fact that the English 101 student "writes badly because he has no interest

in writing because he has nothing to say" (146).

Perhaps asserting that isolated composition courses don't work well comes at the problem backwards. What is to be gained by going inter-departmental in our approach to writing instruction? The basic gain, of course, is that we take our swimming instruction out of the parlor and put it in the pool where it belongs. There is no shortage of material on the joys of interdisciplinary study available to those who are not afraid to get their feet wet (see Hollingsworth in the bibliography). In fact, good articles show up almost weekly--a case in point is that as I prepare the final version of this polemic, I find Theodore D. Lochwood, president of Trinity College, adding his voice to the call for interdisciplinary undergraduate education ("The Rush Back to General Education," Chronicle of Higher Education [May 23, 1977], p. 32). Dixon puts the role of writing in the interdisciplinary framework quite well, when he says

> It would be folly for teachers of English to impose linguistic bodies of knowledge on pupils. If a pupil has sensed that there is a problem or an issue, and is perhaps struggling to find terms in which it can be dismissed, he will see the point of having a frame of reference. He must learn to solve his own problems, guided by the teacher whose awareness and broader frame of reference gives him a better perspective--and a better chance of seeing the pupil's difficulties and encouraging them to emerge (81).

Emerge would be the key word in shaping an interdisciplinary pedagogy of writing instruction, for if we use the context of the student's intellectual life (whether it be welding or world history) as the basis for our writing instruction, the student is more likely to evolve workable, meaningful strategies and behaviors as a writer than is the student presented with the alienating dry runs of English 101.

Less theoretically than Dixon, but with a nice touch of pragmatism, Marshall Kremers says, "When [students] see that their performance in

history can be improved by working on the writing, they start to listen....It is high time English teachers stopped being specialists. No more snobbery. If we are to keep on teaching writing, we need to become generalists. We need to get out into other departments and sell our writing programs." (Kremers teaches at Lassen Community College in California; during his current sabbatical he is working with the staff at the University of New Hampshire on teaching writing; "Teach Writing as a Service Course," Teaching English in the Two-Year College, 3, no. 2 [Winter 1977], 81-82).

What's gained, I think, by teaching writing as a shared responsibility is, in brief, motivation as the student sees his self-interest addressed in concrete terms; a context in which writing instruction has some intelligent meaning; visibility (both fiscal and curricular) for the writing program within the university at large; and a consciousness among the faculty as a whole that writing is a central part of the learning process and that good writing reflects and leads to good learning.

Some Possible Courses of Action

Not that any of this loose rationale will convert anyone. But it does provide an introduction to a synopsis of some possible strategies available to the writing teacher who sees a value in placing writing instruction in an extra-English-department setting. As a way of giving shape to the entries on the bibliography, I'll look briefly at some trends in programs which have worked and which are now in use at various schools. Throughout this section, author citations refer to relevant items in the bibliography.

1. Training faculty from other departments in methods and goals of writing instruction

If it is true in any way that the teaching of writing skills is a function of the faculty as a whole and is not just the arcane province of the English department, it is also true that the typical English department has among its members those who are most likely--through experience and formal training--to know something about the nuts and bolts of writing instruction. It seems logical, therefore, that colleges and universities should create frameworks within which all faculty members (1) would be convinced of the degree to which they are responsible for guiding their students' growth as writers and (2) would be given the necessary instruction in how best to fulfill this aspect of their job; it seems equally logical that in most cases the experienced English faculty would provide the initial background for this faculty education.

Connelly and Irving describe in some detail the evolution of a series of ten-hour summer faculty workshops at Grinnell College, workshops which give intensive, practical preparation in writing instruction to faculty members from departments which, in the past, have not been responsible for writing instruction but which have had some stake in the ability of their students to write. Connelly and Irving begin their seminars with the assumption that writing skills are course-integrated; "We usually agree in principle that writing should be assigned to help the student learn the material of the course...we assign writing to encourage the students to gain imaginative control of the material we want to teach" (668). Through working with samples of student writing from the participants' classes, the group defines those areas of concern--from the elementary grammatical to the sophisticated organizational planes--which are

important to their subject matter area. The instructors' gains in competence are matched by their gains in confidence as guides and critics of their own students' writing, adding an important dimension to their classes.

A second faculty-training model, one which suggests that the accessibility to faculty time offered by the private liberal arts college needn't be a prerequisite for staff development in writing instruction, is the Litra Program of Hostos Community College, Bronx, New York. (An anecdote recently told by Dr. Rafael Cortada, now president of Metropolitan Community College in Minneapolis, will suggest the difference in student populations between Grinnell and Hostos. While Dr. Cortada worked at Hostos, the student government passed a resolution [and, he assumes, enforced it] which stipulated that anyone found selling hard drugs on campus would be killed.) Fisher and Lamdim describe the principle on which the cross-disciplinary Litra program is founded as "every teacher is essentially an English teacher" (9). Through an expensive but effective coordination and integration of roles, English and subject-area faculty work together to battle "a prevailing feeling that English classes [are] one of nature's crueller afflictions and writing something divorced from life or meaningful content" (8).

Also in the CUNY system is the program described by Weiner at La-Guardia Community College. Through distribution of a handbook prepared by the writing staff, Successful Writing Assignments in the Subject Disciplines, and through formal and informal meetings with faculty from subject-area courses, the composition staff act on the assumptions that "faculty in all subject areas must stress correctness in writing skills if students are ever to learn the process of composition" (33) and "teachers of psychology, science, economics, and history have come to realize

increasingly that transfer of skill from the introductory course in English is possible only if reinforcement is frequent and in a variety of contexts" (32).

Though other faculty-training programs exist (see Featherstone), these three seem most typical of the successful attempts at getting subject-area teachers into the business of writing instruction.

2. Technical Writing

Technical writing traditionally has been the sick step-child of the English department. However understaffed and scoffed at it might have been, though, it has through longevity become the most firmly established of the cross-disciplinary courses. The traditional tech writing course has differed from the standard English 101 offering in ways that are instructive: it has frequently been taught in context, with the students' assignments growing directly out of the engineering curriculum in which they are enrolled; instead of being merely dummy runs, the assignments have reflected the students' specialized, frequently formulaic responses to particular situations; students, very often returning professionals, have demanded that course content move from the theoretical to the actual; most importantly, English faculty have been willing to consult with (or be replaced by) subject-area faculties or professional technical writers in designing the curriculum.

As the nine technical writing entries in the bibliography suggest, there is a richness and a variety in technical writing instruction that many departments have not yet realized, a richness that ranges from utilizing technical writing as a substitute for Freshman English to attracting the continuing education professional as a way of answering, in part, the fiscal crisis in smaller departments. See the Brown, Dudley, Henry,

Laster, Minor, Smith, Souther, Thilsted and Whitburn entries in the bibliography--the annotations should provide a sampling of the varied content of the pieces.

3. Team Teaching and Cross-Disciplinary Programs

Many items on the bibliography describe ways in which writing instruction can be successfully tied to the content of subject-area courses, and it is in this vague category that there is the most room for program development (note Baum's warning: in the sometimes more attractive surroundings of a subject-area, writing instruction can seem particularly tedious and can suffer as a consequence). From the general calls for more integration of the learning process (Hollingsworth and Comprone) to the description of particular courses and assignments (Larmouth, Gershuny, and Donlan) the articles cited place the writing teacher in new roles, from consultant to "half-slave" generalist. My own opinion is that the Moss, Larmouth, White-Brand, and the Fisher-Lamdin articles are the most practical in evolving strategies that work in placing writing instruction where it belongs: as the "central enabling discipline" in the undergraduate curriculum, tied to the larger learning process to "equip students to grapple with the abstractions, concepts, and...utterances" they encounter in their various courses (Larson,4).

My own experience in several team-taught, cross-disciplinary courses leads me to echo and expand upon the warning voiced in the Baum article. Promising as the inter-disciplinary possibilities are for the writing teacher, there is a very real burden that accompanies team-teaching. Unless the integrated courses are carefully coordinated, unless central administration provides the release time necessary for the advance preparation that team-teaching requires, the result for the writing course

is likely to be a set of disguised dummy-runs with pretentious titles and no real connection to the student's experience in the subject-area. But when the coordination is there, the results, I've found, are worth the extra effort.

I realize that I've only outlined possibilities--I hope that the bibliography and discussion will provide more substance. But if anything is true, it's that English departments must sell their writing programs (see Kremers above), must, as Elizabeth Cowan has said (alas, I'm not sure where anymore), get off their ars poetica and come to terms with the practical needs of students in the curriculum at large.

[The bibliography was compiled with the assistance of Ms. Suzanne Hofer. The annotations are mine.]

A Selected Annotated Bibliography of Articles on Interdepartmental Responsibility for the Teaching of Writing Skills

Bain, Robert. "Journalism and Composition." Freshman English News, 4 (Spring, 1975), 1-3.

Baum, Joan. "Interdisciplinary Studies, the Latest Experimental Rage." College Composition and Communication, 26, no. 1 (February, 1975), 30-34.

Baum is antagonistic toward the "illegitimate hybrid" called interdisciplinary studies. She offers cautions worth noting, primarily that there is a real danger in losing sight of the sometimes tedious job of teaching writing when this task is placed in the more attractive surroundings of a subject-area like literature.

Brown, Michael R. "Writing and Science: A Freshman Writing Course for Science Majors." A paper presented at CCCC, March, 1975. ERIC DOCUMENT 103 901.

Brown sees the use of technical writing as a useful choice for freshmen who intend to major in technical fields. He finds that using technical material and formats allows him to let "the organization of the topic organize the writing." A useful and practical paper.

Budd, William C. "An Experimental Comparison of Writing Achievement in English Composition and Humanities Classes." Research in the Teaching of English, 3, no. 2 (February, 1969), 209-221.

"The research hypothesis for this study was that expository writing can be taught as effectively by incorporating instruction into a three-quarters humanities sequence as by teaching it separately in two quarters of English Composition. (210)

"Students who enrolled for three quarters of humanities which incorporated instruction in writing performed significantly better on a final written theme than students who received two quarters of writing instruction in separate English Composition classes." (221)

Comprone, Joseph. "Cybernetics and Rhetoric: Freshman English in an Overdetermined World." ADE Bulletin, 46 (September, 1975), 22-31.

Wide-ranging discussion which raises some important questions about the need to address the student's perception of his or her needs as a student and as a graduate. Describes in general terms some ways in which the University of Cincinnati writing program adapts as a "holistic program."

Connelly, P. J. and D. C. Irving, "Composition in the Liberal Arts: a Shared Responsibility." College English, 37 (March, 1976), 668-70.

The authors describe a faculty-training program at Grinnell College in which instructors from subject disciplines outside English are given guidelines to improve their use of essays, reports, and other written assignments in their classes. The assumption is that "the students' compositional incompetence is not the only cause of bad writing. The single most widespread external cause of bad writing is bad assignments." (670)

Dille, Jean L. "Communication on the Job: AC, DC, and Well-Grounded." A paper presented at CCCC, March, 1976. ERIC DOCUMENT 123-632.

Points out that writing teachers too often write course descriptions and lesson plans based on what they were taught and not on the basis of what the student needs to know. Suggests that "advisory committees" from various jobs and professions be called in to help define the content of composition courses.

Donlan, Dan. "Textbook Writing Assignments in Three Content Areas." A Research Study Conducted at the University of California--Riverside. ERIC DOCUMENT 123-635.

"It would seem that the emerging role of the English teacher is that of a writing consultant, one who helps teachers in other content fields, assign, teach, and evaluate writing." (10-11)

Examines types of writing assignments appropriate to Math, Science, and Social Studies content courses.

Donlan, Don. "Social Studies Textbooks and the Teaching of Assigned Writing." Research Study Conducted at the University of California--Riverside. ERIC DOCUMENT 122-303.

Previous Donlan study is more to the point.

Douglas, Wallace. "On the Crisis in Composition." ADE Bulletin, 40 (March, 1974), 3-11.

A general historical and critical study. Douglas is critical of the insistence on "standard English" but is realistic about the need to train underprepared students to fit the occupational standards current in the dominant culture.

Dudley, Juanita Williams. "Griffin in the English Department." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Secondary School English Conference, Boston, April, 1976. ERIC DOCUMENT 123-627.

Proposes teaching technical writing at the high school level as an alternative to the standard composition course, suggesting that "exercises in mechanism and process description, establishing standards and specifications, and making multiple evaluations will sharpen the rhetorical skills which a composition course is, by tradition, supposed to inculcate." (1)

Fagan, Edward R. "English Departments: Half Slave, Half Free." ADE Bulletin, 45 (May, 1975), 25-28.

Looks the "service" role of the English Department squarely in the eye and concludes that with the new, varied kind of student of the future, "English Departments will have to expand their repertory of contexts, that is, to use film, videotapes, small group work, community-based experiences for the student's initial engagement with the discipline." (28)

Featherstone, Jean. "Who Cares about Good Writing?" University College Quarterly, 22, no. 3 (March, 1977), 10-15.

Addresses the question of interdepartmental responsibility: "If reading, writing, and thinking are the three sides of the composition problem, then a permanent solution can come only when all post-secondary teachers care enough about good writing to require it in their classes. True, professors outside of the writing field cannot be expected to substitute for writing instructors; but they can make their students aware that inability to communicate what they know on tests produces marginal grades, that bad grammar often limits communication

and gives a poor impression of the student, that successful persuasion depends upon clear logic, that quality vocabulary enhances expression, and that the need for coming to grips with the written word does not stop with the completion of required English courses or with the completion of one such course." (14)

Fisher, Dexter and Lois Lamdin. "Libra: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Remediation." ADE Bulletin, 41 (May, 1974), 3-7.

Essential practical essay. The Libra program--an interdepartmental remediation program involving reading, writing, and subject area teachers--is described. A full description of an ambitious program at Hostos CC, CUNY.

Gershuny, H. Lee. "Writing as Problem-Solving in Interdisciplinary Programs: Literature and the Age of Technology." Paper prepared at Borough of Manhattan CC, ERIC DOCUMENT 126-532.

Practical description of a working remediation program focused on an "inquiry method." The general theme is that "interdisciplinary programs encourage students to transcend department boundaries, synthesize information, reformulate concepts, and develop writing skills in the process." (1)

Henry, Robert. "The Necessity to Reform English for Engineering Students." Technical Writing Teacher, 1, no. 3 (Spring, 1974), 7-9.

Addresses the need to take seriously the specialized writing needs of students in technical majors. Rather than offer watered down literature courses, the English Departments must provide technical students with the skills they need. Notes, too, that the technical departments have a responsibility to demand high quality writing from their students.

Hollingsworth, Alan M. "Beyond Literacy." Harry Finestone and Michael F. Shugrue, eds. Prospects for the 70's: English Departments and Multi-disciplinary Study. New York: The Modern Language Association, 1973, 78-89.

Articulate and informed survey of those reasons which compel English Departments to "go interdisciplinary." Like the other essays in the volume, it tends to be abstract, not addressed to the question of composition as such.

Hutkin, Ronald M. "A Vocational Approach to Written Communication: Final Report." Platte Technical CC, Columbus, Nebraska. ERIC DOCUMENT 113-601.

The study sought to "establish whether [students] enrolled in written communication courses will achieve a higher level of proficiency in accomplishing the specific cognitive objectives when the objectives are placed in the context of the world of work or when the same cognitive objectives are placed in a liberal arts context." (8)

The study found that "data clearly indicate that the emphasis placed on careers, decision making, and community resources were not only valid objectives for this project, but also created activities which were instrumental in helping students improve cognitive skills and written communication skills." (37-38)

Larmouth, Donald Wilford. "The Life Around Us: Design for a Community Research Component in English Composition Courses." College Composition and Communication, 23, no. 5, 383-389.

Describes in detail the workings of a research report course at University of Minnesota--Duluth and University of Wisconsin--Green Bay. Topics grew out of real concerns and the execution of the

plan involved close cooperation with faculty in other departments. The results sound convincing.

Larson, Richard L. "English: An Enabling Discipline." ADE Bulletin, 46 (September, 1975), 3-7.

The essay looks at ways in which English can become "the central enabling discipline in the undergraduate's first two years of study," primarily through the ability of English to "equip students to grapple with the abstractions, concepts, and vague or ambiguous utterances they encounter outside of English." (4)

The essay builds to the conclusion that we must move away from our tendency to compartmentalize experience within the narrow limits of departmental designations.

Laster, Ann A. and Nell Ann Pickett. "Technical Writing as an Approach to Freshman Composition at Hinds Junior College." Technical Writing Teacher, 1, no. 3 (Spring, 1974), 1-3.

Describes ways in which the Freshman Writing offerings at Hinds JC use a "multi-approach" with emphasis on practical application of writing skills. Thirteen different versions of the course are offered after consultation with faculty from subject disciplines.

Marder, Daniel. "The Interdisciplinary Discipline." ADE Bulletin, 45 (May, 1975), 29-31.

Addresses the general question of decompartmentalization of the humanities.

Minor, Dennis E. "An Integrated Technical Writing Course." Technical Writing Teacher, 3, no. 1 (Fall, 1975), 21-24.

Outlines ways in which the composition material and course material

for technical students can be combined in stimulating long-term research projects suited to the students' professional goals.

Moss, Andrew. "Writing as Problem-Solving: An Integrative Model for the Teaching of Composition." Education and Urban Society, 7, no. 2 (February, 1975), 187-192.

Describes an integrated course at UCLA "based on the idea that students will learn to use writing best if they are exploring topics that have value and significance to them." (188) Use of a writing workshop in conjunction with four subject-area "companion courses" is delineated.

Ong, S, J., Walter J. "The Writer's Audience Is Always a Fiction." PMLA, 90, no.1 (January, 1975), 9-21.

Though the tedium of day-to-day composition instruction is remote from Ong's concerns, the article provides a valuable perspective on the subtle, manifold effect that the imagined audience has on the writer at work. The implications for the composition teacher who does in fact see her students as writers are many, especially in terms of topic, subject area audiences, purposes for writing.

Pichaske, David R. "Freshman Comp: What Is This Shit?" College English, 38, no. 2 (October, 1976), 117-124.

Though the article does not address the question directly, the articulate rejection of "proto-PMLA" style is noteworthy--too often the focus in freshman composition is writing literary criticism.

One of the conclusions here is that "good writing is as much a function of content as technique" and that writing teachers need to "give the student something to say before fussing about how they say it." (124)

Recchia, Edward. "America on Film: A Humanities Composition Course." A paper presented to the National Convention of the Popular Culture Association, St. Louis, 1975. ERIC DOCUMENT 103-880.

Suggests ways in which film can be used as a model for good writing. Sees writing, though, as an "exercise" which is "inspired by" the content of the film.

"Recommendations to the Profession: Carnegie Conference on the State of Undergraduate English" ADE Bulletin, 46 (September, 1975), 58-60.

As one of many recommendations, the group says: "We believe that undergraduate students, especially freshmen, should have a choice of several ways to come to and succeed in writing." One of the specific ways listed is "a course that directly involves a prospective career in a given major field (science, for example) and is perhaps jointly taught between departments." (59)

Redman, George W. Jr. "The Philosophy of Teaching Composition Held by Selected Teachers and Students at the University of Northern Colorado, Winter Quarter, 1973." University of Northern Colorado Ed. D. Dissertation, 1974.

Notes that "students do not expect to be held to any composition standard in a subject matter course" (25), and that interviews with teachers revealed "agreement that the best way to teach writing is use of individual conferences to discuss the process of developing a topic in which the student was personally involved." (v)

Sbaratta, Philip A. "A Flexible Modular System: An Experiment in Teaching Composition." Boston University School of Education Ed. D. Dissertation, 1975.

Discusses the "content-oriented approach" to teaching composition and concludes that "little has been done in this area." (13-16)

Smith, Marion K. "What Can a Technical Writing Course Offer the Non-Technical Student?" Teaching English in the Two-Year College, 2, no. 2 (Winter, 1976), 115-121.

Souther, James W. "Developing Assignments for Scientific and Technical Writing." A paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Modern Language Association, December, 1976.

Articulate analysis of the need for writing in context, emphasizing a "situational" approach to designing assignments. "We must teach our students to analyze the communication situation they face, and to structure a piece of writing to serve that situation." (2)

Thilsted, Wenda H. "An Interdisciplinary Report Writing Course." Technical Writing Teacher, 2, no. 3 (Spring, 1975), 1-3.

Describes a functional, working program at Oklahoma State in which the English Department cooperates with twelve subject area departments in advanced level writing course. Subject-area instructors assist the student with selecting and developing the topic, while the writing teachers direct the writing. The emphasis is on practical skills for a critical audience.

Tigar, Page. "ADE Survey of Freshman English." ADE Bulletin, 43 (November, 1974), 13-23.

The survey itself is not as enlightening as is the criticism of traditional composition methods voiced by some commentators on the survey. The reaction of Geneva Smitherman, Center for Black Studies, Wayne State University, is noteworthy:

It's surveys like this (and I wish to God it were not representative, though I fear it is) that make me ashamed of my profession. For the results reveal that English academics are still into the same ol' same ol': ignoring students and the imperatives of living in a complex, trans-national world. If English instruction is to be useful to our students in pursuit of their immediate academic goals, it should assist them in linguistically and rhetorically conceptualizing complex ideas from a variety of academic disciplines. To many of my colleagues, this smacks too much of what they call a "service course" approach; yet from the students' viewpoint--and I base my thinking on both experience and research--such instruction is an invaluable service, making the agonizing hours of writing and rewriting worth all the trouble. If English instruction is to help our students survive in today's multi-cultural, multi-linguistic world, it must facilitate their competence as communicators in a multiplicity of modes and situational contexts and develop their understanding of communications processes and systems. As humanists, we are striving to produce ethically responsible students who are alert to the power of communication to move and direct human behavior. To return to the basics of the "good old days" (which really wasn't all that good noway, except for those in power--include English profs vis-a-vis students) is to continue insensitivity to student needs and to ignore life beyond ebony and ivory towers. (22)

Weiner, Harvey S. "Writing for the Subject Disciplines: Helping Faculty Help Students." ADE Bulletin, 45 (May, 1975), 32-33.

Concise, articulate, essential article for the topic at hand. Describes ways in which the writing faculty at Laguardia CC work with,

train, and provide materials for subject-area instructors with a college-wide goal of upgrading writing skills and using writing skills as part of the learning process across disciplinary lines.

Whitburn, Merrill. "Technical Communication: An Unexplored Area for English." ADE Bulletin, 45 (May, 1975), 11-14.

Argues forcefully that English Departments should exert whatever leadership force they have in developing technical communications programs on the undergraduate and continuing education levels, and should do so for reasons ranging from the rhetorical to the fiscal.

White, John O. and Norman Brand. "Composition for the Pre-Professional: Focus on Legal Writing." College Composition and Communication, 27 (February, 1976) 41-46. (See also ERIC DOCUMENT 108-220).

Describes in detail the plans and working structures of a course developed as part of pre-professional program at UC-Davis. The strength of the course is found in its being a "joint venture, in which the instructor brings the expertise born of experience in teaching writing to bear upon subject matter that students decide is important to them." (45)